

at the time, this would only seem natural when it is remembered that an epidemic of measles was then and had been for some time after raging.

A. D. Machado.

Malay Witchcraft.

Towards the end of 1901 while I was in charge of a country district in Alor Gajah, complaints were made to me of a certain Pawang Musah who was said to bewitch children by means of a familiar spirit called a Polong. One man stated that one of his children had died from the effects and that another was affected. As his house was only about a mile from where I lived, I and the colonial surgeon from Malacca, who happened to be with me on one of his periodical visits decided to go and see the child. When we arrived at the house we found a large number of people in the house and lying at one end of the verandah, the child (a little girl of 7 or 8 years old) in a semi-unconscious state. The doctor examined it and found that it was in a high fever and evidently dying. While we were there the father sat down and spoke to the child. She opened her eyes and when asked by the father "who sent you here and who is your father" or words to that effect, she replied "Pawang Musah." This was taken by the bystanders to be the voice of the Polong speaking through the child. We were also told that the child had been asked who would be the next victim and had pointed out her older sister a girl of 18 or 19 years old. This girl was examined by the doctor and found to have nothing the matter with her. We assured her she had nothing to fear, and as far as I know she is still alive, at any rate she was alive in February 1902 when I left Malacca. The dying child was suffering from malarial fever, enlarged spleen and starvation and though we sent up stimulants they were of no avail and she died a very few hours after we left. Pawang Musah lived about 2 miles from where the child lived and had a bad reputation as a wizard. He originally came from the other side of Malacca about 30 miles away and had moved about from village to village everywhere getting the credit for the deaths of child-

ren being driven out. I have very little doubt that he traded on the reputation as the people were quite willing to give him anything he asked for through fear that he would otherwise bewitch their children. The explanation appears sufficiently obvious. If any person thought he had in any way offended the Pawang the next case of sickness in his house would in all probability be attributed to him, the illness then being considered supernatural no ordinary remedies would be tried and incantations alone would be used to drive out the evil spirit. The result to the patient is very easy to imagine and as he or she being familiar with the story of the Polong, it is not surprising that the answers given to the well known formulæ coincide with the suspicion of the relations especially when it is remembered that the patient is a young boy or girl in high fever.

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